

# **MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL RETARDATION**

## **12TH ANNUAL DMR/SAC STATE HOUSE RECOGNITION EVENT “Celebrating Independence, Self-Advocacy and Self-Determination”**

**A CELEBRATION OF FAMILIES, PARTNERSHIPS, AND COMMUNITY LIFE**

### **Program and Photo Gallery**

#### **Welcome**



**Mike Wankum**, Meteorologist WCVB TV, Channel 5, hosted the event and welcomed all to the State House and the Celebration.

#### **Remarks**



**Ron Asbjornson**, Vice Chair, DMR Statewide Advisory Council, congratulated the honorees and thanked them for their contributions.

## Commissioner's Remarks



**DMR Commissioner, Elin M. Howe**, noted the importance of self-advocacy and self-determination to accomplishing the Department's Mission.

## Commissioner's Exemplar Awards

Commissioner Howe presented the Commissioner's Exemplar Award to individuals and organizations being recognized for their contributions to self-advocacy and self-determination. She was assisted in the presentation by John Anton, Chairperson of Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong (MASS).

## Self Advocate



**Robert Herlich, Salem**

Robert is a founding member of Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong (MASS).

## Family



**Celia E. Brown, Shrewsbury**

Celia is an ardent advocate for her son and uses those skills to help other families.

## Citizen



**David Robinson- Robinson Sandwich Shoppe, Lowell**

David has made his restaurant a community gathering point for individuals with disabilities in Lowell. John Walsh and Ann Lorenzo accepted the award for David.

## Citizen



### **Fernandez Family Restaurant, Holyoke**

The Fernandez Family provides meals, friendship and a welcoming environment to individuals with disabilities from Holyoke communities. Robin Harmatz, Holyoke-Chicopee Area Director accepted on behalf of the Fernandez family.

## Provider



### **Western Mass Training Consortium, Inc., Holyoke**

WMTC prepared scores of individuals with disabilities for personal and collective self-advocacy.

## Legislator



**Karen E. Spilka, Massachusetts Senate**

**Senate Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities**

Senator Spilka provides leadership on legislation that sustains self-determination for individuals with disabilities.



**Secretary Judy Ann Bigby, MD, Secretary EOHHS,** addressed the Celebration and shared her vision of self-advocacy and self-determination being expressed and supported in Massachusetts programs.



## Statewide Advisory Council Swearing In Ceremony



Secretary Bigby swears in new SAC members



New SAC members and Commissioner Howe

Henry “Hank” Paszko, Maria Freccero, Lisa Ching, Christine Shane, Ron Asbjornson,  
Maria Damiano

## **2008 Gunnar Dybwad Leadership Award**

Commissioner Howe presented the 2008 Gunnar Dybwad Leadership Award to Jeff Keilson for his local and national leadership in self-advocacy, his pioneering work in self-determination through the Family Governing Board, and his exemplifying the ideals of Gunnar Dybwad.



**Jeffrey A. Keilson**

### **The Gunnar Dybwad Leadership Award**

This ceremony marked the twelfth presentation of the Gunnar Dybwad Leadership Award. The Dybwad Award was established in 1999 to honor individuals who have made outstanding contributions to people with intellectual disabilities and their families. Gunnar Dybwad, J.D., worked on behalf of people with intellectual disabilities for more than 65 years. Together with his late wife, Rosemary, Gunnar helped to set the course around the world towards increasing awareness of the rights and abilities of people with disabilities, helping them gain acceptance, independence, recognition, and basic human rights.

### **Past Dybwad Leadership Award Recipients**

1999	Gunnar Dybwad, J.D.
2000	Allen Crocker, M.D.
2001	Florence Finkel
2002	Dan Becker
2003	Michael J. Daly and David M. Bartley, Ph.D.
2004	Richard Krant and Mary Lou Maloney
2005	Emily Nisenbaum and James Brett
2006	Leo Sarkissian and Carol & Richard Beard
2007	Anne Fracht & Craig Smith and State Representative Angelo M. Scaccia

# Recognition Award Winners 2008

## Observations



**Craig Smith**, Founder & Past President, MASS Advocates Standing Strong, shared his perspective on the personal and societal meaning of self-determination to individuals with disabilities.

## CENTRAL/WEST REGION HONOREES



**John Burns, Lancaster**

John made a life changing decision to remain in Massachusetts rather than move out of state with his family. He wanted to remain in his day program and to stay near his friends. John is an active member of the North Central Citizen Advisory Board (CAB).





**Mark Nasjleti, Chicopee**

Mark took control of his life and health by losing more than 133 pounds. He is now a motivational speaker and entrepreneur who helps people with disabilities enhance their health.



**Vilmarie Beltran, Springfield and Elizabeth Dineen, Esq., Springfield**

Together, Vilmarie and Elizabeth were successful in pursuing a criminal complaint. Vilmarie is noted for her courage in coming forth and fully participating in the judicial process. Elizabeth's patience and skill helped achieve a successful outcome.

## NORTHEAST REGION HONOREES



**Mary Westgate, Maynard**

With persevering self-advocacy, Mary received support to become a Music Assistant by attending a music school that focuses on individuals with disabilities.



**Charles Pina, Haverhill**

With the help of his sister, Charlie found a place of his own and became more engaged in community activities. He prepared for and successfully got a part-time job. Active in the self-advocacy movement, he speaks with legislators regarding changing the name of the Department.



### **W.I.S.H.**

Kelly Barchard  
Marguerite McLaughlin  
Nicole Curtis  
Ann MacDonald

Heidi Howard  
Patty Duffy  
Lisa Ducrow  
Brenda Thomas-Chartier

Heather Sousa  
Tina Cain  
Lori Correy

A group of women came together for mutual support to address common issues. In addition to building their interpersonal network, they volunteer at an assisted living facility coordinating recreational and social activities.

## **SOUTHEAST REGION HONOREES**



**Colleen Ryan, Norton**

Colleen is the Regional Director of Learning and Development, an educator and change agent. She supported self-advocates in the founding of Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong (MASS). She continues to advocate for a culture of “person centered thinking”.

**Susan Harrington, Plymouth**

Susan is a valued member of the Southeast Regional staff. She participates in the orientation and training of staff regarding self-advocacy. She travels the country and overseas bringing the Camp Jabberwocky message, “disabilities do not get in the way”.



**Bonnie Forsyth, Kingston**

With a circle of support composed of family and friends, Bonnie overcame a world of fear and anxiety. She manages her services and supports. Bonnie is a former member of the MASS board and is on the Autism National Committee board of directors.



## METRO REGION HONOREES



**Kimberly Plaut, West Roxbury**

Kimberly transitioned from being homeless and dependent on friends and relatives to having her own apartment, developing mobility skills so that she can travel the city by herself, and getting a job at Morgan Memorial Goodwill Industries.



**Pioneers in Self Direction**

Scott Elliott  
Regina Way

James Smith  
Christopher Goss  
Howard “Tony” Payne

Dorothy Smith  
Gloria Milburn-Goss

These “pioneers” participated in the pilot self-determination project. They took responsibility for their service configuration and for hiring/firing staff. The group experienced lots of success and failures or “intense learning opportunities”. They helped lay the foundation for state-wide self-determination models.



**Greater Boston Self-Direction Support Team**

Jessica Noyes  
Catherine Denny  
Patricia Rotondo  
Cheri Nelson  
Alice Andrews

Martin Kariuki  
Hyacinth Whitt  
David Barber  
Luis Castillo

Michelle Mosley  
Karla Brown  
Monika Awramczuk  
Jeancarlo Flores

DMR staff and providers worked collaboratively to monitor and support participants in the self-direction programs. The Team helps participants maximize benefits and minimize risks in making choices. The Team itself is a model of DMR/provider partnership.

## CENTRAL OFFICE HONOREES



**Robert Cutler Jr., Arlington**

Rob is Past President of the Autism National Committee and the first person with autism to hold that position. He was a vocal and visionary member of the DMR Statewide Advisory Council promoting institutional closure, changing the name of the Department, and inclusion of self-advocates.



**Reginald Clark, Brookline**

Reginald does not let visual impairment limit his travels throughout the city. He is an active member of the Statewide Advisory Council (SAC), the Boston Citizen Advisory Board (CAB), and the Metro Region Quality Council.



**Joseph Canto, Haverhill**

Joe is former Chairperson of the Northeast Self-Advocacy Group. He is a natural leader very involved in activities to change the name of the Department. Joe works in the DMR Human Rights office.

### **DEVELOPMENTAL CENTERS HONOREES**



**Brenda Rankin, Waltham**

Brenda is President of the Fernald Developmental Center Abilities Club and the Metro Region representative on Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong. She is a compassionate, sensitive woman who values her independence.





**Tom Fulginiti, Baldwinville**

Tom is an activist, an artist and a peer leader. He is involved in legislative advocacy to change the name of the Department. His growth in self-advocacy contributes to his personal growth. He is a resource to his peers at Templeton Developmental Center.

## **Closing Remarks**



**DMR Commissioner Elin Howe** congratulated the Honoree, their families and support teams for their outstanding accomplishments. She noted that many other individuals have experienced similar success and that the Honorees represented them all.